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WILDLIFE SERVICES—INDIANA

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WILDLIFE CONFLICTS INFORMATION HOTLINE Indiana: 1-800-893-4116

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Indiana

Every day residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Indiana Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists respond to these requests with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve conflicts.

WS works to protect property and reduce human health and safety risks at airports, schools, and businesses. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards many natural resources from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by Indiana WS

include protecting endangered least terns from predation; sampling and monitoring for avian influenza in waterfowl and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer; and managing damage caused by coyotes, birds, and other wildlife.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS personnel staff the toll-free Indiana Wildlife Conflicts Information Hotline. This Hotline and companion website are a central resource for science-based, biologically sound information on wildlife damage issues. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

Protecting Agricultural Resources—WS works with both livestock and crop producers in Indiana to manage agricultural damage caused by wildlife in an environmentally sound manner. WS works directly with producers, and through trainings and workshops, to incorporate Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) principles into everyday activities on farms and ranches. IWDM practices help reduce wildlife damage while minimizing pesticide use in crops and at other agricultural facilities.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—The civil and military aviation



communities widely recognize the increasing threat to public safety from wildlife collisions with aircraft. WS partners with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and civil and military aviation communities to address this problem. WS has played a key role in reducing this threat to aircraft and passenger safety. WS personnel use IWDM techniques to effectively reduce and minimize bird strikes at a major airport in Indiana. Strike numbers decreased an average of 80 percent since WS involvement began. Over the past year, the airport conducted 222,275 successful aircraft operations, transporting 8,524,442 passengers.

Protecting Workplace Health and Safety—An Indiana steel mill copes with more than 26,000 Ring-billed gulls nesting in its operational areas. Gulls created health and safety hazards through the accumulation of large quantities of droppings and by wandering onto roads, causing vehicle accidents when drivers try to avoid them. WS designed a management plan incorporating IWDM principles to alleviate these problems and provides training and oversight of the project.

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Providing wildlife damage management, consulting and instructional services
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Operating the toll-free Wildlife Conflicts Information Hotline and Web site
- Protecting food, pharmaceutical, agricultural, and dairy products from contamination by birds and other wildlife
- Protecting workers from wildlife hazards and disease

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Indiana:

- Improving urban pest bird damage management methods
- Managing plant community composition to reduce the attractiveness of airfields to hazardous wildlife.
- Monitoring wild furbearers for rabies and other zoonotic diseases
- Monitoring waterfowl for avian influenza and other zoonotic diseases
- Monitoring feral swine for Classical Swine Flu and other zoonotic diseases

This resulted in significant reductions in health and safety concerns.

Protecting Pets and Other Companion Animals—Thousands of Indiana residents encounter conflicts with native wildlife every year as the State’s expanding urbanization increased interactions between people and wildlife. Most of the public has little experience or knowledge in dealing with wildlife disease issues. A sharp increase in the number of calls to the Wildlife Conflicts Information Hotline alerted WS personnel to a potential outbreak of distemper in the raccoon population. WS notified Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Board of Animal Health (BOAH), as well as nuisance wildlife control operators and wildlife rehabilitators of the disease’s spread. The impacts of the outbreak were minimized through early detection, coordination and cooperation.

Urban Human Health and Safety Issues—Large flocks of pigeons, starlings, crows, and Canada geese in urbanized areas pose problems for many cities. Accumulations of droppings, unsanitary conditions, property damage, and aggressive bird attacks present public health and safety hazards and public relations challenges. WS frequently assists city managers, other officials, and citizen groups to evaluate bird problems and to develop cooperative strategic plans to reduce pest bird problems in an acceptable manner.

Protecting Endangered Birds—Predators negatively impacted the nesting success of least terns at an Indiana utility company. WS provided technical assistance on predator management and facilitated the issuance of Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) permits to allow the removal of predatory ring-billed and herring gulls. Five additional species were recently discovered to feed on, interfere with, or trample least tern nests.

Major Cooperators:

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana State Department of Health
- Purdue University
- Indianapolis Pest Bird Task Force
- Indiana Dairy Producers
- Indianapolis International Airport
- Terre Haute International Airport
- Evansville Regional Airport
- Purdue University Airport
- Indiana Air National Guard

WS continues to work with the least tern working group to develop innovative solutions to predation issues.

Addressing Property Damage Caused by Resident Canada Geese—WS assists business owners who experience severe Canada geese problems, which result in thousands of dollars of damage and loss by destroying landscaping, creating unsanitary conditions and attacking customers and employees. WS offers wildlife management services, develops goose management plans, facilitates required permits, and provides information on management alternatives and on private professional wildlife management services.

Protecting Multiple Resources from Pest Bird Damage—Protecting agriculture and food safety through pest bird damage management is a major consideration for WS in Indiana. Starlings chronically consume, as well as contaminate, feed at many dairies in Indiana. Large flocks of starlings and other pest birds at these facilities has resulted in a significant cost increases for feed and antibiotics to reduce the prevalence of salmonella and other diseases transmitted through bird droppings. Increased production costs are reflected in higher costs for the consumer as well as for the producer. Many health professionals and the American public have grown concerned about the use of antibiotics in production of meat and milk products. By reducing sources of salmonella and other bacterial contamination, WS pest bird management activities have reduced the feed lost to birds and lowered the need for antibiotic treatment in dairy cows.

Looking to the Future

In Indiana, public safety is a concern for wildlife managers, particularly at airports. Most Indiana airports do not have the expertise or resources to manage wildlife hazards on their own. Additional attention must be given to this very specialized work.

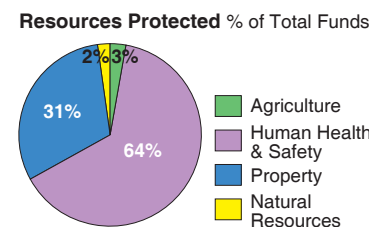
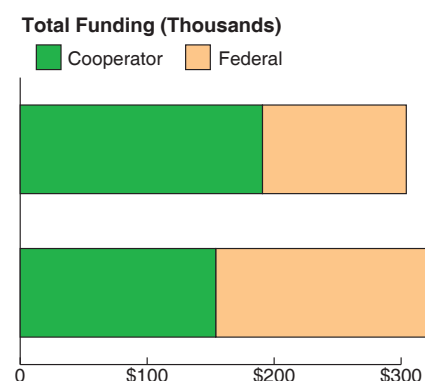
A second issue, related to public safety and economic loss, involves the increased need to recognize and manage wildlife-related diseases. The appearance of West Nile Virus in Indiana and recent concern about avian influenza elevated the public’s recognition about our vulnerability to wildlife-borne diseases. CWD in Illinois deer and Bovine TB in Michigan deer also

increased awareness of the potential economic impact of wildlife-related diseases, including pseudorabies, brucellosis, and Exotic New Castle’s Disease, on Indiana’s livestock resources. WS has taken the lead in monitoring wild bird populations for avian influenza and provides assistance with zoonotic disease monitoring programs in Indiana.

The State also needs to manage the transmission and westward spread of rabies from the eastern United States. Indiana WS currently is participating in a proactive rabies surveillance program in cooperation with National WS’ effort to prevent the westward spread of raccoon rabies and, hopefully, to eliminate rabies from the United States.

Indiana Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program such as producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and Local government agencies. In most cases, cooperators need help resolving wildlife damage problems and/or they participate in the IWDM activities.



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